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TEXT

TAGS: PTER, ASEC, FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH COURTS CONVICT TERRORISTS OF ACTION
- DIRECTE'S LYON BRANCH

REF: PARIS 1695

1. (LOU) SUMMARY: A LYON COURT HAS SENTENCED ANDRE OLIVIER AND MAX FREROT, THE TOP LEADERS OF THE LYON BRANCH OF THE FAR-LEFT ACTION DIRECTE TERRORIST GROUP, TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT. OVER A DOZEN AD-LYON COLLABORATORS WERE GIVEN MORE LENIENT PRISON TERMS. THE PROSECUTION PRESENTED AN IRON-CLAD CASE THAT IMPLICATED THE GROUP IN OVER SIXTY CRIMES, MAKING THIS THE LONGEST AND MOST COMPLEX TERRORIST TRIAL IN RECENT FRENCH HISTORY. THE TRIAL REVEALED AD-LYON AS AN ISOLATED, ALMOST CULT-LIKE GROUP, WHOSE CONCEPTION OF "REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE" WAS TOTALLY OUT OF SYNCH WITH THE REALITIES OF MODERN DAY FRENCH SOCIETY. END

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SUMMARY.

2. (U) ON 29 JUNE A SPECIALLY CONSTITUTED COURT OF SEVEN PROFESSIONAL MAGISTRATES IN LYON, FRANCE, CONVICTED 18 MEMBERS OF THE LYON BRANCH OF THE FAR-LEFT ACTION DIRECTE (AD) TERRORIST GROUP FOR A VARIETY OF CRIMES RANGING FROM CRIMINAL ASSOCIATION AND ROBBERY TO HOMICIDE. THE GROUP'S TWO RINGLEADERS, ANDRE OLIVIER AND MAXIME FREROT, RECEIVED LIFE SENTENCES WITH NO POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE FOR 18 YEARS -- THE TOUGHEST SENTENCE PROVIDED BY FRENCH LAW. TWO OTHER TOP AD-LYON TERRORISTS, EMILE BALLANDRAS AND JOELLE CREPET, RECEIVED ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE LENIENT PUNISHMENT -- LIFE AND NO PAROLE FOR 16 AND 10 YEARS, RESPECTIVELY. THE REMAINING ACCUSED RECEIVED LIGHTER SENTENCES, RANGING FROM 7 YEARS TO EIGHT MONTHS IMPRISONMENT, ACCORDING TO THE EXTENT OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN AD-LYON'S SEVEN YEAR SAGA OF BANK-ROBBERIES, HOLD-UPS, AND BOMBINGS.

3. (U) THE LYON BRANCH OF AD EMERGED IN THE EARLY 1980S WHEN ANDRE OLIVIER BROKE AWAY FROM THE AD'S MAIN (SOMETIMES CALLED "INTERNATIONALIST") FACTION HEADED BY JEAN-MARC ROUILLAN, WHOSE LEADERS WERE TRIED EARLIER THIS YEAR FOR THE MURDER OF RENAULT PRESIDENT GEORGES BESSE (REFTEL). AD-LYON SPLIT FROM THE INTERNATIONALIST FACTION LARGELY BECAUSE OF PERSONAL RIVALRY BETWEEN OLIVIER AND ROUILLAN BUT ALSO OUT OF DIFFERENCES IN "REVOLUTIONARY" STRATEGY -- ROUILLAN WANTED CLOSE ALLIANCES WITH OTHER EUROPEAN TERRORIST GROUPS SUCH AS THE BELGIAN FIGHTING COMMUNIST CELLS AND AND THE ITALIAN RED BRIGADES, WHILE OLIVIER FAVORED AN EXCLUSIVELY FRENCH APPROACH. AD-LYON ALSO ADOPTED LESS SPECTACULAR -- AND CONSIDERABLY LESS LETHAL -- TACTICS THAN THE INTERNATIONALIST FACTION. THE GROUP SHUNNED POLITICAL ASSASSINATION IN FAVOR OF "SYMBOLIC ACTS," GENERALLY DESIGNED TO AVOID FATALITIES, SUCH AS THE BOMBING OF A POLITICAL PARTY HEADQUARTERS, AN ISRAELI-OWNED BANK, THE OFFICES OF A RIGHT-WING NEWSPAPER, ETC. AD-LYON ALSO DEVOTED A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF ITS ENERGIES TO "FUND-RAISING" IN THE FORM OF BANK ROBBERIES AND OTHER HEISTS. THE GROUP'S ONLY VICTIMS -- A GENDARMERIE GENERAL, A POLICE BRIGADIER, AND A BANK TELLER -- WERE KILLED WHEN THEY TRIED TO INTERVENE TO FOIL THESE ROBBERIES.

4. (U) THE SEVEN-WEEK-LONG TRIAL ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION. THIS WAS DUE NOT TO THE GROUP'S INHERENT IMPORTANCE OR LETHALITY BUT RATHER TO THE EXHAUSTIVENESS AND COMPLEXITY OF THE DOSSIER THE PROSECUTION PREPARED AGAINST FRANCE'S ONLY SIGNIFICANT "HOME-GROWN" FAR-LEFT TERRORIST GROUP. THE TRIAL COVERED OVER SIXTY CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE GROUP AND INVOLVED AD-LYON'S ENTIRE ORGANIZATION, FROM THE "HARD-CORE" OF OLIVIER AND FREROT TO FRINGE ELEMENTS ONLY TANGENTIALLY INVOLVED WITH TERRORISM. FURTHERMORE, COPIOUS DOCUMENTATION SEIZED BY THE

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POLICE (INCLUDING A 30 PAGE WORK OF "SELF-CRITICISM" BY FREROT HIMSELF) ENABLED THE PROSECUTION TO DISSECT THE LIFE-CYCLE OF A TERRORIST GROUP, STARTING WITH ITS BIRTH AND PROCEEDING THROUGH ITS IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT, FINANCING, VIOLENT ACTIVITIES, INTERNAL DISSENSIONS, AND EVENTUAL COLLAPSE.

5. (U) THE JUDICIAL DOSSIER PREPARED AGAINST THE GROUP WAS SO THOROUGH AND DAMNING THAT THE DEFENDANTS'

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SUBJECT: FRENCH COURTS CONVICT TERRORISTS OF ACTION LAWYER, JACQUES VERGES, (FRANCE'S BEST-KNOWN ATTORNEY WHO HAS REPRESENTED THE LIKES OF **KLAUS BARBIE** AND **GEORGE IBRAHIM ABDALLAH**) NEVER CONTESTED THE PROSECUTION'S FACTS. INSTEAD, VERGES FOLLOWED HIS USUAL TACTIC OF TRYING TO PUT FRENCH SOCIETY ON TRIAL FOR THE CRIME OF CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION AND REPRESSION. VERGES, IN A REMARKABLE TRIUMPH OF RHETORIC OVER REASON, ACCUSED FRENCH SOCIETY OF CULPABILITY FOR AD-LYON'S ACTIONS: "IS NOT A SOCIETY GRAVELY ILL WHEN 20 OR 30 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DIFFERING BACKGROUNDS -- ANTI-RACIST, ECOLOGIST, PACIFIST, FEMINIST -- ARE CAPABLE OF FORMING A COMBAT GROUP AND OF STAYING TOGETHER IN CLANDESTINITY FOR SIX YEARS, COMMITTING 30 HOLD-UPS AND 30 BOMBINGS?" VERGES, ALLUDING TO A PROPOSED AMNESTY FOR POLITICIANS IMPLICATED IN CAMPAIGN FINANCING SCANDALS, CLOSED BY FUSTIGATING "THIS ROTTEN SOCIETY WHICH AMNESTIES THIEVING, ROBBING, MINISTERS AND THEN ATTACKS WITH THE GREATEST CRUELTY THE MOST PASSIONATE OF ITS CHILDREN!"

6. (U) VERGES' EFFORTS TO PORTRAY HIS CLIENTS AS STARRY-EYED IDEALISTS WERE SOMEWHAT SULLIED BY THE VIOLENT, ANTI-SEMITIC, COURTROOM OUTBURSTS OF OLIVIER AND FREROT. THEY RAILED AGAINST THE FORCES OF "JUDEO-IMPERIALISM" AND "SOCIAL-JUDEOCRACY" AND ASSERTING THAT THE COUNTRY WAS SUFFERING UNDER THE BOOT OF (ELYSEE ADVISOR) JACQUES ATTALI, "THE MAN OF TEL-AVIV." OLIVIER COMPLAINED THAT HIS GROUP HAD BEEN STABBED IN THE BACK BY PSEUDO-REVOLUTIONARY FRENCH JEWS WHO "BETRAYED THE NON-JEWISH MILITANTS FOR A MESS OF POTAGE." OLIVIER CONCLUDED ONE OF HIS DIATRIBES BY WARNING THE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT THAT "YOU WILL PAY FOR YOUR TREASON WITH YOUR DEATH OR WITH THE DEATH OF A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY."

7. (LOU) COMMENT: THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED BY THE PROSECUTION DURING THE TRIAL PORTRAYED AD-LYON AS A SMALL GROUP OF -- ADMITTEDLY DEDICATED AND VIOLENT --

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MISFITS WHO HAD FALLEN UNDER THE SPELL OF A CHARISMATIC "GURU," ANDRE OLIVIER. UTTERLY ISOLATED FROM FRENCH SOCIETY AND UNABLE TO CRAFT EVEN A SEMI-COHERENT REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY, AD-LYON DEVOTED MOST OF ITS TIME ROBBING BANKS AND PREPARING FOR A REVOLUTIONARY DAWN THAT NEVER BROKE. PERHAPS THE GROUP'S MOST TELLING OBITUARY WAS WRITTEN BY A PARISIAN JOURNALIST: "AT THE END OF THE TRIAL THERE REMAINS STRANGE FEELING OF FEAR AND DERISION. THREE YEARS AGO THESE TERRORISTS WERE THE MOST WANTED CRIMINALS IN FRANCE; AT THEIR TRIAL TODAY ONE HAS THE IMPRESSION OF JUDGING MEN FROM ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER WORLD, ANOTHER COUNTRY. THIS IS, PERHAPS, THEIR GREATEST FAILURE: THE OBLIVION INTO WHICH THEY HAVE FALLEN." CURLEY##

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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